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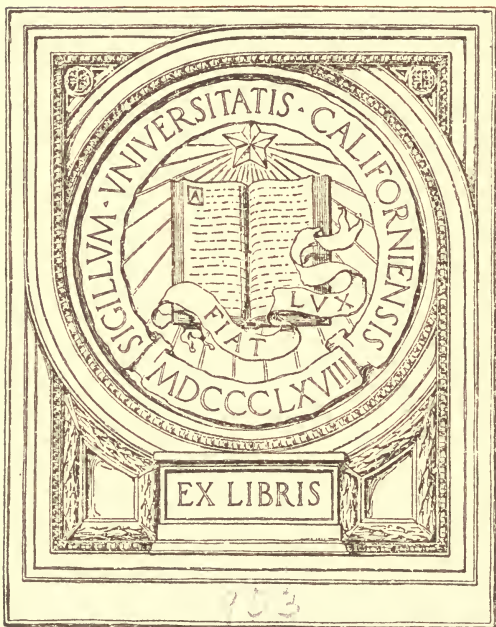
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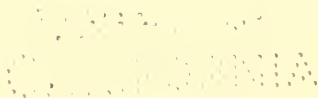
A LITTLE BOOK:

TO OBTAIN MEANS FOR

PLACING A MEMORIAL STONE UPON THE GRAVE
OF THE POET

HENRY TIMROD.

FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION.



PUBLISHED FOR THE COMMITTEE, BY
WALKER, EVANS & COGSWELL, PRINTERS,
CHARLESTON, S. C.

COMMITTEE.

As soon as sufficient means are obtained, the Stone, with an appropriate inscription, will be placed upon the grave, under the direction of the following gentlemen :

HON. HUGH S. THOMPSON,

State Superintendent of Education, (Columbia, S. C.)

HON. GEORGE S. BRYAN,

Judge of the Federal Court, (Charleston, S. C.)

PROF. F. A. PORCHER,

Prest. So. Ca. Historical Society, (Charleston, S. C.)

PROF. JAMES H. CARLISLE,

Prest. of Wofford College, (Spartanburg, S. C.)

REV. ELLISON CAPERS,

(Greenville, S. C.)



Mrs. J. Vanderbilt

New York

Believing that you share with us in a high appreciation of the poetic genius of Henry Timrod, we take pleasure in presenting this "LITTLE BOOK" which has been published for private circulation.

The undersigned have in contemplation the erection of a Memorial Stone on Timrod's Grave, which has remained unmarked since his burial in 1867, as a simple honor to the memory of one whose merits as a Poet are everywhere acknowledged.

The contribution from each friend who receives this "LITTLE BOOK" of from \$2 to \$5, will ensure the means of paying this tribute.

The author of the pieces which make up this little volume—Prof. WM. J. RIVERS, desires us to add for him, that the writing of verses has been with him, as with many of us, an occasional pastime; and that he hopes the lack of merit in those here given will be no bar to your generous consideration of the good object which their publication is designed to accomplish.

Very respectfully,

HUGH S. THOMPSON.

GEORGE S. BRYAN.

F. A. PORCHER.

JAMES H. CARLISLE.

ELLISON CAPERS.

Maj. H. S. Thompson, Columbia S. C., has kindly consented to act as Treasurer, and receive such amounts as you may feel able to contribute.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF HENRY TIMROD'S POETRY, AND HIS RANK AS A POET.

A LECTURE TO THE STUDENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH CAROLINA, DELIVERED SHORTLY AFTER
MR. TIMROD'S DEATH.

YOUNG GENTLEMEN : It is not often that an opportunity occurs to impress upon you the instructions which you here receive by pointing to examples within the range of your personal knowledge. Such an opportunity occurs this evening. You have read or are reading the poems of ancient and modern nations : and you have no doubt thought that it would be a source of gratification to you, had you known, as you know one another, the writers whose beautiful productions have filled you with rapture and admiration. Such a gratification your memory will now afford you in the instance of one, who though not among the highest poets of the world, is, perhaps, the best of the departed poets our State has given birth to. To you, when you shall have completed your education here, it will belong, as an

especial duty, to recognize literary merit and be its promoters and guardians in the communities in which you may live; and such an exercise of recognition and kindly regard, though, alas! to the dead and not to the living! you are invited to participate in on this occasion. To some of you may be allotted the pen of the poet, and it may be hereafter your solace and chief delight to receive the praise which you now would bestow upon the poor and unobtrusive bard who came here to spend the last days of his brief existence; and who was accustomed to come frequently to these peaceful halls of learning, through sympathy with our studies, or charmed by the seclusion of the spot; unknown perhaps to some who saw him, unappreciated perhaps by many who knew him, till the grave had closed over him, and from every direction throughout the country, memorials in his praise began to reach our ears.

More than twenty years ago, among the pupils of a school in which I taught, was HENRY TIMROD. As he was then, diffident, modest, with a nervous utterance, yet with melody ever in his thoughts and on his lips—so, with no change through all these years, he appeared to me when I visited him a few days before he died; still almost a child in simplicity of demeanor and purity of sentiment, as if his quiet heart knew not the work it had done in giving forth from its depths of feeling, melodious songs; as a flower gives forth, at the bidding of nature, its fragrance when a

bud, its fragrance when its full blown petals are unfolded to the sun, its fragrance when the death dews bend its yielding beauty to the dust. Happily, he had heard the verdict of his generation, placing him among the poets of his country—a just verdict, which, we doubt not, posterity will sanction forever.

There is little of what is called achievement to record of one who avoided the busy world from an inaptitude for its conflicts, and, it may be, from a disdain of its pursuits. The life history of such a one, is but a story of the affections or a delineation of intellectual development. Still such a life has its lesson for us, as all lives have. The qualities of manhood may oftener be displayed in enduring ills, struggling against temptations, and triumphing in self-sacrificing duties, than in leading armies or dying amidst the plaudits of the multitude. In this view there is much to admire in Mr. Timrod's endurance and perseverance, under circumstances calculated to oppress and dishearten. From his youth he often suffered from spells of ill health, premonitions of the fatal disease which brought him to the tomb. For some years his strength had been failing, and since the close of the war it had been his lot to bear more serious privations than even his friends were aware of. Through all his days the poet's inheritance was his—unrequited performance and a continual struggle with adversity. Yet, through all his days he refused to court the prosperous.

The sensitiveness of his disposition, and a certain pride of independence, made him shrink from the extended hand of patronage. He felt that he also had his riches, and could impart them freely too—the riches which nature lavished upon him throughout her beauteous domain, from the purling brook at his feet, up through the waving trees, and higher than the singing birds can soar, to the sparkling diamonds in the sky. The rich, indeed, partook of his riches; but did not force upon the reluctant poet, as they should have done, a portion of their own, that his time might have been devoted to the mission which destiny had assigned him. His literary toil was to him a self-rewarding toil, it brought him neither food nor clothing—yet, with no ill will towards any, with no envy, with no repining at fortune's meagre favors, he lived; and to the last, whispering graceful verses, he died, and left us to regret that we did not prize him more. Such is the lesson of his life.

When a boy, Mr. Timrod's talents attracted attention and secured him many friends. Their names, could they with propriety be mentioned on this occasion, would indicate the more than ordinary appreciation which marked the opening of his career as a poet. His early efforts not only gave promise of correctness of taste and beauty of language, but also of that personal feeling or heart experience which characterizes all he has written. Like Byron, if he had been requested to compose verses on a given sub-

ject, he would have replied that he could not, unless he had personally known the occasion, unless his own soul had felt and the instinctive spirit of song had been stirred within him. This truthfulness to his own heart, this reverence for nature as she was revealed to him, secured to his effusions an absence from affectation and from the imitation of the writings of others. This is the source of his excellence—the foundation of his success ; for this we would wreath a garland in his honor, in that he has given us in the charming language of enduring songs—not idle sentiments, insincere opinions, or mere brilliancy of fancy—but a revelation of one more human soul true to itself and to nature. We can trust to every portraiture of his pen as the genuine disclosure of what his heart experienced. Does he feel in early youth the first strange fluttering of incipient love ? Does the awakening to disappointment fill him with self-tormenting melancholy ? Is he again and again baffled when he hoped mutual affection would bestow peace and joy ? and does he at last rest in the haven he has sought, to find too soon that there is no permanence of earthly bliss, that sorrow is linked with love, and that through suffering the heart is perfected ? Yes, and he, too, when love is strongest, must lay down his love in the tomb ; when life is sweetest, must go down himself into the chill waters of the valley of the shadow of death ; but with a blessing he descends, for he beholds beyond the flood the serene vision

of everlasting permanence, and bows down in reverential prayer. All this and much more of his soul's experience he has given us in language perspicuous, simple, and melodious.

The charms of external nature, in those varied appearances which have, from creation's dawn, excited the admiration of poets, seem to have made less early impressions on Mr. Timrod's mind : or, at least, such impressions seem not so readily to have evoked the power of song as the experiences of which we have spoken. Where another would describe, as minutely almost as a painter would put on canvas, an imposing scene, a storm, a cataract, a gorgeous sunset, Mr. Timrod, by habitual introversion, looked for the blending of his humanity in some phase of thought or feeling with the material objects before him—sweet affections with the flowers, gentle murmurings with rippling rivulets, sadness with the drooping clouds, courageous aspiration with the towering mountain, moody passion with the howling tempest. Could he have been placed in company with the author of *Rokeby* and the *Lady of the Lake*, amidst the lovely scenery depicted in those poems, whilst the bard of *Abbotsford* would have thrilled with the charms of the mute realities around him—our poet, yearning for something beyond the objective, would sadly have sought communion with the spirit of nature, and listened to hear some language in the leafy glens, some voice among

the crags and rushing torrents; not that he loved the beauty and the grandeur less, but because his contemplative disposition turned him continually to interrogate and to interpret all things in relation to the nature within him.

If the views thus briefly expressed appear to you to be correct—you to whom Mr. Timrod's poems have long been familiar—you will, no doubt, also think with me, that a tinge of melancholy pervades his writings, appearing at times as though against his will, even in the lighter productions of his muse. And this—was not this, too, being true to himself? And in saying this do we not confer the highest eulogium upon his poems? giving our record to those who knew him not, that no false glitter or borrowed sensation, or ambitious exhibition of imaginative power or poetic skill, engaged his pen, but that like Burns, he has left us the truth of himself as he really was, and felt, and loved, and thought, and joyed, and sorrowed, and hoped, and prayed.

Connected with this view of Mr. Timrod's poetry, we may notice another characteristic which may either have sprung out of this one, or have resulted from a thoughtful consideration of what a poet's mission should be. I mean the apparent selection of certain principles to guide him in authorship — self-experience, truthfulness, and purity of sentiment.

Unrolled before him was the scroll of history, and his education had been such as leads through the literature of

ancient and modern times. Is it not, therefore, a mark of genius that from boyhood he should turn from these and the poetic materials they furnished, to study himself, drawing his inspiration from the well spring of his own consciousness? And what did he learn from this study of himself? He learned to speak to the universal heart whose symphonies, he knew, would respond in accord with his own, only if in his own, sincerity and purity prevailed; for all that is false, discordant, and sinful is abnormal and a perversion of nature. He made this great law a law unto himself, both by preference of the principle which ought to direct whatever he might have to say to the world, and from the fact that he naturally sought what was congenial in that which is innocent, pleasing, and intellectual. His fastidiousness in rhythm also contributed to this effect—I mean to delicacy and moral purity; because, while for each separate poem, he fashioned as it were a polished casket in which to present it to the public, it behooved him to regard the intrinsic value of what the casket should contain. In his estimation, beauty and truth constitute the elements of poetry. The truth is never sacrificed to mere beauty in his writings, and this seems due, in addition to the guiding principle he had chosen, to the equiponderance and happy blending in his mind of reason and fancy. If the latter of these faculties with restless pinions hovered over the birth of a new song, the other with restraining care calmed the

sportive sprite to quiescence and thoughtfulness. Upon the whole, though he had a most modest estimate of his endowments, he appears to have understood his mission in the exercise of the gifts he was conscious of, guarding always not only the justness, but the chasteness of his sentiments and language, as though his mission was from Heaven, and he was responsible that it should neither be perverted nor debased.

We would not underake to say that Mr. Timrod might not have been successful in descriptive, didactic, heroic, or dramatic composition, had he lived longer; but none can doubt his success as a lyric poet, in delightful versification and in the combination of his conceptions to represent faithfully the emotions and passions. What he believed he was fitted for, he attempted; and in what he attempted, hath he not done well?

The place among poets which he strove to gain, he achieved; and fills it with acknowledged distinction. He was often pointed out as he passed along as the minstrel of the Southern lyre. Some of his shorter lyrics are equal in ✓ their vein to the most exquisitely fanciful effusions of any poet we have read. What sweet wit graces the verses called "Second Love," in which he pleads an excuse for having loved another.

"It was indeed that early love,
But foretaste of this second one—
The soft light of the morning star
Before the morning Sun."

"She might have been—She was no more,
 Than what a prescient hope could make—
*A dear presentiment of thee,
 I loved but for thy sake."*

> What ingeniousness and felicity of expression abound in the poem to "Katie," coming from England, with some of England's sunlight entangled forever in her curls. What pleasant fancies flit about the "Lily Confidante," and "Baby's Age," which, beginning with the buds of April, hath its successive weeks marked by a calendar of flowers. > What archness in the lines to "Florabel." What tuneful sonnets—distinguished as sonnets ought to be—by perspicuity, completeness, and artistic finish, without the show of art. What elaborateness in the "Vision of Poesy," the most studied effort of his pen. These qualities, with a shade at times of gentle melancholy, pervade many of his compositions; still, there are occasional vibrations of the stronger passions when, as it were, the tragic muse, passing, touched the chords; as in the address to the "Spirit of Storm," and in the thrilling pathos of a "Mother's Wail." But why should we enumerate the excellencies of writings in which, it may be said, there is nothing inferior, nothing undeserving praise, and a great deal that challenges admiration.

Had the writings of Mr. Timrod been confined to the simple subjects of the volume he published, the prevailing

prettiness of his fancies, the gracefulness and melody of his versification, his truthfulness and purity might have associated his name with the gentlest of minstrels, who with lute in hand, preferred to sing in shaded bowers, or strolling along some flowery stream ; and who, if occasionally snatched up among the whirling clouds of thought or passion, would always be most happy to return, as he says himself in one of his sonnets to

“Cling to the lowly earth and be content,
So shall thy name be dear to many a heart,
So shall the noblest truths by thee be taught—
The flower and fruit of wholesome human thought,
Bless the sweet labors of thy gentle art.”

There is, however, another and a higher view of Mr. Timrod as a poet ; for his productions at successive periods of his life, exhibit an improvement which was the result of continued study and training in his art. The terrible realities of our late eventful history, roused him as nothing else on earth could have roused him : and in the excitement of his soul he strung his lyre to more exalted themes, and poured forth in quick succession many spirited odes, which give him rank among the foremost lyric poets of America. Strange, that one who had been so long wedded, like Horace and Anacreon, to peaceful ditties of the unwarlike lute, should have been like Körner, so carried away by inspiration when he heard the bugle blasts of conflict. We

need not, perhaps, recall to your recollection the beautiful introductory lines of the "Ethnogenesis," when a new nation seemed born into the world :

"Hath not the morning dawned with added light
And shall not evening call another star
Out of the infinite regions of the night,
To mark this day in heaven?"

And who does not remember his battle hymn, "Carolina!" the recitation of which, it is said, caused crowded audiences to rise to their feet?

Who does not remember the calm and classic ode to the old city, where

"Dark Sumter, like a battlemented cloud,
Looms o'er the solemn deep."

Who does not remember that masterly production, "Christmas," or a prayer for peace, which passed the borders of conflict and was re-echoed through the North. We consider it one of the best odes our country has produced. I am almost unwilling to quote from it; for, like a well proportioned temple, it will not bear a separation into parts. The time is Christmas in Charleston, and the poet asks: "How shall we grace the day?" The chimes of St. Michael's, that for generations had rung in the gleeful Christmas morn, had been removed. Sad changes had come over many hearts and many homes. Mirth would be

out of place in numerous families, for the loved ones at the festive hearth a year before, were keeping now their "mute Christmas beneath the snow" that mantled the stained battle-fields throughout the land. The ode proceeds :

 " How shall we grace the day ?
 Ah ! let the thought that on this holy morn
 The Prince of Peace—The Prince of Peace was born,
 Employ us, while we pray !

 Pray for the peace which long
 Hath left the tortured land, and haply now
 Holds its white court on some far mountain's brow,
 There hardly safe from wrong.

 Let every sacred fane
 Call its sad votaries to the shrine of God,
 And, with the cloister and the tented sod,
 Join in one solemn strain !

 With pomp of Roman form
 With the grave ritual brought from England's shore,
 And with the simple faith which asks no more
 Than that the heart be warm !

 He, who till time shall cease,
 Will watch the earth, where once, not all in vain,
 He died to give us peace, may not disdain
 A prayer whose theme is—peace.

 Perhaps ere yet the Spring
 Hath died into the Summer, over all
 The land, the peace of His vast love shall fall
 Like some protecting wing.

Oh ! ponder what it means !
 Oh ! turn the rapturous thought in every way !
 Oh ! give the vision and the fancy play,
 And shape the coming scenes !

Peace in the quiet dales,
 Made rankly fertile by the blood of men ;
 Peace in the woodland, and the lonely glen,
 Peace in the peopled vales !

Peace in the crowded town,
 Peace in a thousand fields of waving grain,
 Peace in the highway, and the flowery lane,
 Peace on the wind swept down !


Peace on the farthest seas,
 Peace in our sheltered bays and ample streams,
 Peace whereso'er our starry garland gleams,
 And peace in every breeze !

Peace on the whirring marts,
 Peace where the scholar thinks, the hunter roams,
 Peace, God of peace ! peace, peace, in all our homes,
 And peace in all our hearts !”

Such is the well merited position Mr. Timrod has gained among lyric poets. When it was announced to him a few weeks ago that his life could not be prolonged, “ must I so soon depart,” he said, “ who hoped to achieve so much ?” And though Death’s icy hand was upon him, he still occupied himself with the “ gentle art ” which had been the solace of his life. His disease was one which generally leaves the intellect unclouded, refines the sensibilities, and

gives to the mind visions more distinct and clearer thoughts ; and it was, therefore, natural that he should look with fond regret upon the silent lyre—in the dust—at his feet—unstrung forever !

I have not deemed it suitable, on this occasion, to enter into a display of Mr. Timrod's merits by attempting a critical exposition of his poems ; this, if indeed there shall be need of it, must be left to essays and reviews when his collected works shall have been published ; nor has it seemed proper to prepare a sketch of his life, or of his character ; this will be done by a fitter pen than mine. But, while yet the sod is fresh upon his grave—while yet the cheeks of those who loved him are wet with tears—some brief tribute like this seemed due to his memory from us among whom he died, and who cannot view with indifference the loss which the cause of letters has sustained in the early death of Henry Timrod.

You, young gentlemen, whose generous sympathies are ever readily awakened in behalf of the struggling sons of genius of whom you read, and who, perhaps, have dropped a tear over the fate of a Chatterton or a Keats,  will not fail to be instructed by this notice of one who possessed endowments equal to theirs. Wherever literary excellence is observed, I am sure you are attracted toward it ; and while here you are taught to admire the great masters who have bequeathed to you their noble works,

you should also learn, as I said before, to recognize, in your day and generation, all that is praiseworthy, and to encourage and promote it. It is seldom, if ever, given to any one man to combine all the moral excellencies that appertain to our nature ; and we may venture to say that *never* has it been given to one man to possess, in their highest degree, all the intellectual powers of which we are capable. Among literary men, in poets more than in any other, so large a combination of rare qualities is required to attain to excellence, that the names of those we call the great poets of the world may be counted upon our fingers. The highest type of a poet (at least to my mind) is King David—leaning upon his harp, with eyes upturned to the God of his inspiration! Then—through a long interval—we observe the solemn brow of intellectual compass, and the closed eyes of a Homer or a Milton ; and near them an Æschylus and a Shakespeare ; then a Pindar, and further off a vast assemblage, among whom some aspire to no more than singing simple songs and ballads, yet to these we give honor too ; we who lift up our faces to the mighty oak, and bend in admiration over the tiny flower, who gaze upon the eagle soaring in the clouds, and watch with delight the silver wings of the butterfly. If, in your life-time, no transcendent genius dawn upon the world within the range of your recognition, and claiming your personal homage, yet many minor poets of rare excellence may

exist, keeping alive, like the vestals, the flame upon the altar—the flame that was kindled from heaven! If you refuse to listen to them, you may, with churlish hearts, be turning an angel from your doors. When I tell you that Mr. Timrod received for his literary labors but a scant reward—that during all his life he was left to contend with disappointments and discouragements, let the lesson be worth more to you than a mere acknowledgment that the fortune of poets now is much like that of poets in the olden time; that the same nature reproducing them, reproduces also, those who care not for them. Do *you*, in your generation, care for them, and encourage and aid them, and honor them.

The subject opened before us is a very extensive one, and suggests many interesting and instructive remarks. But it appears most consonant with the object we have had in view on this occasion, to say no more than to add, in conclusion, a thought which may enhance in your eyes the Poet's mission. It is that the world has need of such gifted sons of song, not only because by subtle skill and charming melody they soothe the passions, fill the mind with gentle emotions, inspire us with a love of home and of our country, and of the enjoyments of peace and the refinements of civilization, and that too by means calculated in themselves to afford us exquisite gratification; not because they are the immortal heralds of the people's glory (while temples and statues and paintings and monuments are

crumbling to dust), and send forth their songs clothed with "winged words" to the farthest habitations of men, while the orator's voice at home is hushed and the musician's hand is still, and the pageantry of wealth and the luxurious grandeur of life disappear like the grass that withereth; not because they contribute to social and domestic happiness, like music, from which, indeed, they seem inseparable, and teach to the inert and ignorant heart a knowledge of itself, and give to it an appropriate language for its thoughts and its affections—but for more than all this—because they continually remind us of our immortality.

Perishing mortals, as we are, we hope to ascend to those radiant realms where the Eternal God is worshipped by angelic hosts with songs of adoration—where the ecstasy of spiritual life is expressed in melodious strains—where harmony, such as we can scarcely conceive of, prevails amidst the circling orbs of light, symphonious with the anthems that arise from "ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands" who worship around the throne. Whenever men, "made but a little lower than the angels" and made to worship as angels worship, would unite in adoration, their natural voice of praise and thanksgiving is an outpouring of melodious and rhythmical words; not from any studied conclusion that this will be acceptable, but from the fact that *it is so*, and that thus God has made us to worship Him. We can imagine that when over Eden

“ the rosy-fingered hours unbarred the gates of light,” the first utterance of man was a song—his first words were poetry—and the Almighty heard it, as it were the voice of an angel. The earth indeed hath need of poets, though now their minds be darkened, and their souls corrupt, and their imaginations dull, and their words feeble ; we need them to remind us of whence we came ; for we are traveling now in far off and gloomy and rugged places, where the music of a harp and the sweet words of a song bring to us something like a recollection of a home we have wandered from. and with the remembrance comes a pleasing hope of our return ; where clothed in purity we shall be permitted to unite in songs of praise forever, and poetry will be the instinctive utterance of our souls.

STANZAS

ON AN

ANCIENT SUPERSTITION,

CONCERNING THE WORLD'S DESTRUCTION,

The nations of Anahuac believed that the sun, with all mankind, except a few individuals, had been three or four times destroyed; that another destruction, total and final, would occur; but only at the completion of one of their Cycles or Periods of fifty-two years, and only on the last night of the Period, and at midnight. The close of every Cycle was, therefore, a time of awful anxiety. Human victims were sacrificed on their lofty pyramidal temple. Every spark of fire in the whole country, according to ancient custom, was extinguished. The people of the Aztec capital, led by their priests, marched forth at sunset in solemn procession to a mountain about six miles distant, to await on its summit their approaching doom. If the midnight hour passed as usual, the event was instantly indicated by a bonfire on the mountain. Games and national festivities followed. (See Cullen's *Clavigero*, *Hist. Mex.*, I, p. 288. McCulloh's *Researches*, p. 224.

I have supposed one aged priest, lifted above the superstition of his people, dispelling their terrible despondency by anticipating the hour, and secretly lighting a bonfire on their Teocal or high pyramidal temple.

I.

The night of death with gloomy wings outspread
 Swept o'er the trembling earth. Oh, who can tell
 The woes it brought, when numbered with the dead
 The living seemed, and nations hopeless fell!
 Scarce is the mastery mine, with magic spell,
 One spirit to recall—one who had stood
 That woeful night, a lonely sentinel,
 And watched the signs of fate, in mournful mood;
 But nerved with purpose bold and courage unsubdued.

If to reveal the past such spirits deign,
 And foregone fears of death and earthly woes
 Be not to them as themes but idly vain,
 Him would I pray that night's sad scenes disclose;
 For not the gloom of death that threatening rose
 Appalled his heart nor checked his purposed deed,
 Whence morn from midnight barst, and hope (that glows
 E'en on our graves) sprang, winged with joyous speed,
 And o'er each drooping soul her quickening radiance shed.

He watched—while myriads sank in sore dismay—
 If all the beauteous stars that erst had shone
 In sweet assurance of returning day,
 Now harbingers of death, should one by one,
 Fade from the sky ere half their course was run—
 Though on his brow the sacrificial crown,
 Though cinctured chief of augurs, he alone
 Had dared, that night, the auguries disown,
 And break the fatal spell that bowed his nation down.

Yet hardly knew he then the wondrous power
 Of his own deed. As one, with sudden thought
 Of inspiration, climbs some beacon tower
 While howls the midnight blast, and 'tis all nought

Can save the stranding ship whose helm is caught
 By Death, in mocking guidancee—when on high
 The beacons blaze !—and all the fiends who wrought
 The fearful storm aghast and baffled fly -
 By his bold wisdom foiled who filled with light the sky.

Serene he stood the sacred height upon,
 Where dripped the blood of human victims, slain
 To avert the fatal hour. No more the sun
 Should rise (their prophets sang), but night regain,
 In starless triumph, her primeval reign.
 Thrice had the earth, convulsed with partial doom,
 Her stricken sons and daughters prostrate seen ;
 Thrice had beheld returning day relume
 Her happy fields—and Life its wonted course resume.

Another Cycle ends ; at midnight ends,
 To-night ! and all, foredoomed, but wait to die.
 Their agonizing fear together blends
 The strange portents of earth, and air, and sky,
 With mystic words of ancient prophecy,
 That told the terrors of this dolorous night ;
 When star by star should vanish from on high ;
 And prayer, and vow, and sacrificial rite
 Should fail to save one beam from all the realms of light.

When thro' the awful gloom the voice of man,
 Feebler and feebler heard, should pass away ;
 And living forms faint, helpless, groping, wan,
 To loathsome reptiles fall an easy prey ;
 Till Death, relentless still, should end his sway,
 His victory o'er—his sable banner furled—
 And leave to dismal stream, and surging sea,
 And crumbling rocks, down the dark valleys hurled,
 To sound their echoing dirge, and mourn a lifeless world.

So their undoubting souls in childhood learned ;
 So priest and sage had taught their riper years.
 Whoe'er, through stubborn unbelief, had scorned
 Such fear of death, now turned with bitter tears,
 And prayed for life as darkening night appears
 With dire forebodings of their certain doom.
 Ah me ! how could I wish that woe like theirs,
 Long buried in the oblivion of the tomb,
 E'en in a transient dream again on earth should come !

In artless rhyme I thought, forsooth, to tell
 Only of one who durst with boldness stand
 That fearful night, and all that him befell.
 For when their warrior host and priestly band
 I called, to bare their breasts at my command,
 And give their griefs and fears to fill my song,
 They spurned my feeble spell and borrowed wand ;
 Yet words and sighs that to deep woe belong
 The naming of that night wrung from the flitting throng.

And still they seem before me—still my heart
 Hears their sad wail as when they fled from view !
 What though the boding sky, the silent mart,
 The death-like desolation spreading through
 The homes of men—what though such scenes renew
 Their dreariness, and move before mine eyes !
 My soul but sees, while tears my cheeks bedew,
 That vast and moaning throng, whose piteous cries,
 Through all the cheerless day, went echoing to the skies.

Again they seem to live. Each household throng,
 From field and hamlet near had come to die
 Where'er their priests should lead them : old and young,
 Friend, foe—yea, e'en the direst enemy

His feud forgot, and helped where, with a cry
 Of hate, he would but yesterday have slain,
 O'er all the same impending fate is nigh;
 And beast and bird, as with prophetic ken,
 Fill with unearthly screams the abandoned haunts of men.

What first, what last of grief I heard or saw,
 I know not; for like waves resounding came
 The mingling vision. Numbed as with an awe,
 Transforming to one image all our dream
 Of wreck or plague, or devastating flame—
 I seemed, where'er I turned my glance, to trace
 The same—yet thousands—and yet still the same
 Woe-smitten father with uplifted face,
 Pleading for a dear child that wept in his embrace.

To my sad thoughts all grief this semblance wears;
 For I have, powerless, watched my dying son,
 Whose look I could but answer with my tears,
 The trustful, loving look that dwells upon
 The memory forever; and in each moan
 From that vast throng I heard a father's prayer,
 That on his own thrice-willing heart alone
 Might come the pangs his child was doomed to bear,
 Such torturing pangs as filled the stoutest soul with fear.

On us, O Death, they cried! on us be cast
 The hideous doom—on us thy horrors bring,
 With all thy throes of anguish, all thou hast;
 And from our suffering hearts with torture wring
 The life-blood drop by drop—and we will cling
 To thy cold hand, as to a friend's, O Death,
 If thou our children spare, or o'er them wing
 Thy way, like twilight o'er fair flowers beneath,
 Whose petals gently fall, chilled by the evening's breath.

In vain they plead; their frenzied souls must hear
 Their children's plaintive moans, and powerless be
 Their life to save or soothe their sad despair.

Yet, ere the westering sun had touched the sea,
 While swelled the maddening wail, a long array
 Of white-robed priests swept forth, who called them near
 The holy Teocal, once more to pray;
 Perchance e'en yet to sacrifice and prayer
 Some sign from heaven might come, some hope their hearts to cheer.

As when to sudden march, at Moses' call,
 A nation sprang—no faltering step delayed
 Of age or sex; but forthwith great and small
 Their homes forsook, and marched where'er he bade.
 So these respond—tho' hopeless and dismayed,
 And stood in crowds the Teocal around,
 And watched their priests, as up, with solemn tread,
 Now hid, now seen, from side to side they wound,
 Leading aloft to death their victims gaily crowned.

Sombre and vast, and midway to the clouds,
 The pyramid upraised its towering head.
 Ah! well the watchers know, when smoke enshrouds
 That far-teen shrine, some quivering heart hath bled!
 And well they know a shriek was heavenward sped,
 That could not reach their ears so far below!
 There, woe-begone, on trembling knees they prayed,
 Till down returned the train with footsteps slow;
 Their garments crimson-dyed, that went up white as snow.

And from their midst a voice that pierced the soul,
 Proclaimed, with startling tone, "No victim slain
 Can now the world's impending fate control!
 Rise from the dust—your suppliance is in vain;

Rise, and march forth—a nation's funeral train—
 To die where erst our fathers stood to die,
 Nor shrunk to meet the doom the gods ordain.
 Let martial songs, and bursts of minstrelsy,
 And heaven-heard pean shouts, our own brave death-dirge be !"

Then might the eye behold (if eye there were
 Could turn to note another's dire distress)
 How sons their aged sires did onward bear,
 And mothers to their hearts their infants press,
 And fathers stoop their children to caress,
 Or calm their fears—their own lips blanched with fear;
 And then were heard shrill cries of wretchedness,
 (If ear there were in all that throng could hear
 Aught else but its own heart's wild throbbings of despair.)

There saw I one disheveled, bathed in tears,
 Who, though through life she seldom word unblent
 With malice spake—now haggard, frall with years,
 Beneath an uncouth burden tottering went—
 Her idiot son with crippled body bent.
 His ear she ne'er had soothed with utterance mild ;
 But lo ! with streaming eyes, on love intent,
 She raised him in her arms and feebly toiled
 The onward host to reach, with frantic sorrow wild.

And stalwart men were uttering plaints of woe :—
 From some distraught arose the desperate call
 To venturous flight ; from some the shriek, or low
 Sad voice of grief, or tone unnatural
 That cried 'be brave,' yet brought fresh fear to all.
 And one there was who fled to die alone,
 As loathing to behold the piteous fall
 Of wife and child beloved—but heard their moan
 And turned to their embrace—their fate shall be his own !

And some who had themselves in caverns hid,
 Come forth—still shuddering at the horrid scene
 Of gloom therein and ravenous beasts which did
 With instant death assail them; but in vain
 From death they flee to join the pallid train
 Who march to meet their doom. Thy dripping dart,
 Thy sheathless sword that hath its myriads slain,
 Must pierce, O Death, the faint, the dauntless heart—
 More strong, more subtly swift, where'er they are, thou art !

Who can escape ? Who nerved with hope innate
 That clings to life, or winged with crazed despair,
 Can thwart the stern omnipotence of fate
 And flee from death ? Urged by the huntsman's snare
 To pitfalls yawning in deep valleys near,
 Bewildered sweeps the shaggy buffalo
 Down from the hills; and in the lightning's glare
 The condor dies—far o'er his quivered foe,
 Struck in his cloudy height whilst shunning fate below !

II.

Beyond the city gates a mountain reared,
 O'er crags and chasms, its lofty peak, whereon,
 In ancient times, whene'er the fate they feared
 Passed harmless by, the first bright signal shone,
 Proclaiming, far and near, the midnight gone;
 Then answering signals blazed, whose gladdening beams
 Eastward and westward, northward and southward thrown,
 Roused the vast empire from its doleful dreams
 To song, and festive dance, and all that mirth beseems.

At morn, the sun first lit that mountain height;
 There latest gleamed when dusky eve had come.
 Hither went forth the crowd; some, in affright,
 With loud lament for life implored, and some

In sorrow mute—but none durst wait their doom,
 Durst wait, alone, the midnight shrieks to hear
 Re-echoed back to each deserted home.
 Ah! tho' no hand can help, or voice can cheer,
 The fainting spirit craves some kindly presence near.

Yet had the desperate host tumultuous been,
 But pipes and blaring gongs in concert blent
 Still urged them on, as, marching o'er the plain
 And up the mount, their toiling steps they bent;
 To gain ere night should cloud the steep ascent,
 A terrace sward, the rugged rocks among;
 There, while the day a glimmering radiance lent,
 Midway they paused; what time the priestly throng
 To the departing sun chanted their farewell song.

Whither, O God of light,
 Whither from shrines and temples, in thy flight
 Bearest thou the brilliant day
 Swiftly on with flaming wheels for ever far away?
 Hasting in vengeful wrath
 To waste thy glories where no hearts adore;
 Thro' lurid shades borne on thy path
 Beyond the earth, and sea, and sky, unworshipped evermore!
 Lo! here the clouds all night
 Keep watch to announce, with gorgeous hues, the birth
 Of joyous morn, whose golden light
 Awakes the waves to greet thy beams with dance and boisterous mirth.

And here, sweet groves and flowers,
 Bathed in thy warmth, their fragrant incense yield;
 Here twittering birds in blooming bowers,
 And rippling rills, the wooing breeze, and every teeming field,
 Their daily homage bring
 To thy life-giving beams—while blithely sing
 Youths and maids with kindling eye
 In thrilling melodies of love beneath the radiant sky.

When comes the lowering night,
 They droop, and sleep, and dream of thy fair light;
 If now that light no more be shed,
 All nature sinks in endless gloom—all hushed and cold and dead!

O leave us not to die!
 And we will rear to thee a golden shrine
 Whose lustrous disk shall catch on high
 The morn's first beams that glistening o'er the eastern waters shine,
 And pour them down to earth
 From this proud height—that here thy coming seen
 Shall earliest be—and issuing forth
 Each day we'll greet the bright returning glories of thy reign.
 O still thy suppliants spare!
 O let one lingering ray our path illumine!
 Send forth some sign to calm our fear,
 Some sign that still shall harmless pass this dreaded night of doom!

The gathering shades arise
 To whelm each feeble ray before it dies;
 The purpled clouds seem filled with blood,
 And hoarsely rolls beneath thy car the ocean's crimson flood.
 O! God of light, for thee
 Behold our robes with sacred stains imbued!
 See—from night's prison-caves set free,
 Dread monsters flit, and dismal Fear, and all her horrid brood,
 On shadowy wings are borne!
 Send forth—O send athwart the darkening heaven
 One glittering ray in token given,
 That thou wilt still in triumph come, bringing the beauteous morn!

To save one cheering beam to light their way,
 Westward they stretch their suppliant hands in vain;
 And listless watch the death-bed of the day,
 Till the dusk twilight fills the distant plain,

Then upward moves the melancholy train,
 With frantic grief or stern and pallid face,
 And many shudder and look back again
 Thro' streaming tears; and with unsteady pace
 Follow reluctant on, nor dare their steps retrace.

Perchance their farewell glance sad memory leads
 To tombs near home where they had hoped to lie;
 While every throb of nature in them pleads
 To shun the doom that calls them forth to die
 Where no surviving hand will close the eye,
 Or to its sheltering grave the body bear.
 Oh! who would perish where no power is nigh
 To shield the form we leave all helpless here?
 E'en welcome then might be the bitterest foe we fear!

On all it loves the spirit may look down;
 Part of ourselves the body is, to rise
 Immortal, and again to be our own.
 If what we cherish here, in death we prize,
 The soul, abandoning the happy skies,
 On mournful wing disconsolate may come,
 Lingering where its cold corpse unburied lies;
 As theirs must lie, to wither in the gloom,
 Till the slow-crumbing hills their mouldering bones entomb.

Or would they still, still downward gaze as in
 Cavernous depths of gloom, and fondly seem
 To catch with straining eye the distant scene?
 The home of many loves, and all they deem
 Their own to love forever; for no dream -
 Of love destroyed in death, when death's keen dart
 The suffering body slays, had come to them,
 Chilling their hopes, and whispering in each heart,
 "Stripped of its ties on earth, the soul must hence depart."

No, by the undimmed flame in my own breast,
 By every love-born blush, and sigh, and tear,
 By all the gentle host of angels blest,
 Who come from heaven to earth, and upward bear
 To heaven our love to those who wait us there,
 The powers of Death are powerless to quell
 The life-long love that turns to memories here,
 And with sweet hopes unyielding to the spell
 Which wafts it into death, looks back to say farewell !

E'en scenes inanimate that wake to joy,
 Or soothe the soul, as with their sympathy,
 May leave an impress Time cannot destroy,
 May leave an influence which Eternity
 Will not efface ; and if our life to be
 Lose not the happy memories engraven
 Upon the soul while in us—who shall say
 What loves it may not keep to mortals given,
 Or what of earth's pure joys it may not bear to heaven ?

Perchance their tearful glance might now recall
 The scene where childhood viewed the starry dome,
 Bent arching o'er their blest abode ; where all
 The world was centred, and each lovely bloom
 Its birth-place had ; as if for that dear home
 The sun was made to shine and stars appear ;
 But sombre clouds or threatening storms would come,
 As comes the ungenial shade of gloomy care
 On boyhood's sunny brow, unmeant to linger there.

The birth-place of our joys, the shady grove,
 The grottoes and melodious brooks that lure
 To blissful reverie or dreams of love—
 O ! 'tis not Nature bids the soul abjure

Its ties with scenes so fair, wherein our pure
And hallowed deeds we fitly chronicle

From youth to hoary age, and ponder o'er,
When from the past the thronging visions fill
Our moon-lit home, and all save memory is still.

Dear home of childhood! some kind fairy dwells

In your enchanted groves, and bids you share
Orr love, and clothes you with her subtle spells!

Sentient you seem; your flowers, methinks, may hear
The maiden's sigh, when heaves her bosom near
Your blushing buds, from sight of all afar,

Nor tell the wanton breeze that wanders there,
Nor the enamored bee, nor twinkling star,
That bosom's secret love, or what its utterings are.

There oft, with musing gaze, the sunset light

In boyhood they had viewed on dale and rill,
Till dancing up from shrubby height to height,

It glanced its sportive beam from hill to hill,
And from the mountain-top, in joyance still,
Leapt to the clouds, and peeped from pillows piled

Of beauteous hues, ere Evening drew her veil
Around its couch; then, like a rosy child,
It sank to placid rest, and in its slumber smiled.

In manhood too, when woke the merry morn,

Springing from happy visions, they had led
Their dark-eyed sons, with bows of polished horn
And dart and lance, through forests widely spread,
And smiled in praise when the swift arrow sped
Or when with bold approach they slew the prey.

At eve their golden spear-points homeward shed
The glittering gleams that closed the joyous day—
Far off a mother's eye beheld them on their way.

But now how changed ! a gloom eclipsed that sky
 Unlike the gloom of eve. The awful shade
 Our spirits feel when coming ills are nigh,
 Swept, like the wing of Death, their hearts dismayed ;
 And palsied Reason tremblingly obeyed
 The tyrant Fear—her crown and sceptre gone ;
 And revelling Night in wild dominion swayed
 Her realm usurped, and reared her on throne
 In the dim arch of heaven—earth, sea, sky, all her own !

Appalling darkness brooded o'er the land,
 Darkness as of the tomb. No flickering trace
 Of light was left ! The shrinking child, whose hand
 A father clasped, saw not that father's face ;
 Whose livid form chilled, as in Death's embrace,
 Assimilated seemed to what it soon
 Must be, when the faint throbbing pulse shall cease.
 Yea ! many sink, wrapt in the oblivious swoon
 That numbs the aching heart—kind nature's welcome boon.

And many cast themselves upon the ground,
 Haggard, and reckless where they die, and yearn
 For instant death to come, tho' all around
 For life implored. Oh ! hast thy bosom borne,
 O Earth, a scene so woeful and forlorn,
 Since struggling thro' the gloom thy heights to gain,
 Thy death-doomed children crept, with toil o'erworn,
 And turned their prayerful looks to heaven in vain,
 While rose the engulfing Flood and poured the Deluge rain.

Glaring upon them now, impatient Death
 Would fain anticipate the fated hour,
 And lurks, as doth some ravening beast, beneath
 The murky night, his victim to devour,

Crouching and watching with malignant lour,—
 But when the wildered soul, to madness driven,
 All hope forsook, and prayer had lost its power,
 Whose faith declared that help might yet be given?
 Who looked with trusting heart and pleading eye to heaven?

III.

He who, though risen at my behest he came,
 Had deigned but brief reluctant words to speak;
 And from his reticence my spell could claim
 No more; yet for my eager longing's sake
 He seemed to cause the ancient dead to awake
 And move before me; and, methought, unveiled
 Again on hill and plain and peopled lake
 The horrors of that night their souls assailed—
 While through the deepening gloom himself I still beheld.

Alone he seeks the dark deserted shrine,
 Where, charred and stained, the fallen faggots lay.
 The helpless host he left, with bold design
 As wafted back on Mercy's wings; while they,
 His quick return unseen, toiled on their way
 Up the steep mount, to die when midnight came;
 Or with wild shouts of joy their victim slay,
 And news of life (if life be theirs!) proclaim
 With waving torch and far seen cloud-ascending flame.

Majestic grace adorned his aged brow
 And noble form erect. To heaven he raised
 His thoughtful face, still lit with all the glow
 Of ardent youth, but passionless; and gazed
 In reverent mood. The sky awhile emblazed
 With stars, beamed with no calmer light than shone
 From his clear eye. Tho' monarchs sank amazed
 And warriors quailed, he came to look upon
 Their scroll of Fate and its omnipotence disown.

The priestly garb he wore; but seldom stood
 With priestly crowd adoring sun or moon,
 Or gods whose altars reeked with human blood.
 His gentle heart the love of all had won;
 That heart's fierce conflict to them yet unknown,
 With groans and tears he waged, as year by year
 The bloody sacrifice he strove to shun,
 Or strayed on solitary mountains, where
 With nature he communed, and kneeled in humble prayer.

God is where'er the human voice invokes
 His mercy and his aid. On sea or land,
 In crowd or desert drear, who upward looks
 Seems in the midst of heaven's fair dome to stand,
 Which spreads in silence round on every hand,
 In emblem of an all-embracing love,
 That guards each soul, yet doth o'er all expand,
 Pouring its gentle influence from above,
 Where'er, by day or night, thro' the wide world we rove.

Such love he surely knew who yearning came
 To bless the sorrowing and the helpless save.
 When visioned to my view, I sought his name,
 His lips, responsive else, no utterance gave.
 What paltry fame could such a spirit crave?
 Let crested helm and kingly brows that wear
 The wreaths of Fame, her empty glories have!
 To him was given—'t was all he wished—to hear
 The mourner's happy song—the sufferer's grateful prayer.

On the high Teocal, in reverie lost,
 Still as a statue, save the glancing eye
 That traced each movement of the starry host,
 He saw not, rising slowly, gloomily,

Like spectre giants far off in the sky,
The mustering clouds—but gazed as tho' he meant
The world's portentous horoscope to try;
Alas! how hard to rest in faith content,
E'en if from God himself a heavenly guide be sent!

But faith prevail'd. "No will," he said, "or thought,
Or power, I find within your orbs of light.
Tho' sages teach that your fair rays are fraught
With evil destinies, that all your bright
And marvellous host but blazon o'er the night
The doom of realms, ordaining kings to die,
And beautifully beaming on the blight
Yourselves have wrought, and on crushed hearts that lie
Pierced with your subtle shafts of cureless agony.

"Falsely they teach! The glory that is strown
O'er your mysterious paths He will uphold
Whose ministers ye are, around whose throne
Ye tremulously move in awe controlled.
And we shall live! and you, even as of old,
All impotent to harm, shall still appear;
No beam annulled, no dire confusion rolled
Amid your ranks, nor thro' the darkened air
Shall nature's death-song sweep from falling sphere to sphere.

"Once arbiters of fate, your host did seem;
Prophetic sovereigns of all good or ill.
New-wakened to the thought of God supreme,
I come, as tho' His mandate to fulfil,
I come to break your fancied power—to still
The tumult of despair. No more to me
Shall purposeless destruction mark the will
Of nature's God. E'en now, as mine shall be,
The souls of all, from doubt and maddening terror free."

But while he spake, the lightning flashing forth
 Darted its signals thro' the distant air,
 Calling the pitiless storm-God to the earth—
 Slowly he turns, the altar's pile to rear
 Of resinous wood heaped up with many a layer,
 Where sleeps the strength of roaring flames. But fast
 The storm assails him, lifts his hoary hair,
 And round him whirls, as round some stately mast,
 Alone and tempest-tossed, that braves the howling blast.

Hark ! on the wild wind comes there not a shriek !
 Or do the demons whom he dares betray
 Even at their wonted shrine, draw near to wreak
 Their vengeance ere his proud words pass away ?
 Again that cry ! the shrieks of agony,
 Pierce shrilly from the mount thro' wind and rain
 And deafening storm, and in his sympathy
 Fain would he seek the frantic host again,
 Whose horror would but hear his soothing words in vain !

But thundering round him the fierce storm had come
 Through the rent sky. And gleaming o'er his head
 The lightning flashed—then all again was gloom.
 Startled, as tho' a funeral torch had shed
 Its glare into a tomb where lay the dead
 He might have saved by putting forth his hand—
 He cried, 't is done !—and soon the blaze is spread
 From layer to layer ; as speeds a lightning brand
 That fires some mountain-top, far seen through all the land.

On many a height throughout the darkened realm,
 Sad watchers far and near their vigils keep,
 Nor turn their earnest gaze from whence the flame,
 By ancient rite first lit, should upward leap

Above the Aztec Mount, and bid each steep
 Its blaze respondent wake. No hand had done
 Such deed before, had dared their terrors sweep
 At once away--nor knew they if upon
 The mount or Teocal the distant signal shone.

The flame burst forth. Far from the Teocal,
 With quickened step, the nero-priest had gone,
 None knew his name who ventured for them all
 To break, ere yet the destined hours had flown,
 Their spell of terror. Brighter, higher shone
 The daring signal, curled its lambent flame,
 And shot its eager light; while swift upon
 Its happy errand, each diverging beam
 Sped cheerily to bear glad news where'er it came!

Mingled with thankful prayers, shout after shout
 Of sudden joy from far-off cities rose,
 And now the birds in strange alarm fly out
 From hidden nests, now flap their wings in close
 And closer circles round the flame—as glows
 From tower to tower the ascending beacon-light
 Thro' all the excited land, and eastward throws
 Its gladdening rays, and westward takes its flight,
 Blaze answering to blaze from hill and mountain height.

Skimming the lake it passed, and o'er the stream,
 A band of light, till on the ocean's breast
 Scattering its diamonds, fairer than the gleam
 Of Evening-Star, it glittered in its rest,
 Its happy mission done.

What lips unblest
 As mine, a nation's joy and loud acclaim
 For life can tell? When all in garlands drest,
 With rapturous songs greeted the Day's bright beam,
 That dawning o'er the east in cloudless brilliance came.

My own heart leaped with joy to hear their songs
And gladsome shouts, while from afar and near,
From echoing hill and dale, the merry throngs
With banners came, and called with boisterous cheer
Throng unto throng—and music filled the air,
And thousands climbed the rugged heights upon
To hold their children up, the soonest there
With clapping hands to welcome back the sun,
As on their fair young brows his golden radiance shone.

Oft was the story told in after days,
How some mysterious being from on high,
Robed like a priest, had lit the signal blaze
With lightning-flashes from the stormy sky.
And oft was told how one, whose majesty
Might well have graced a being of heavenly birth,
Had taught that in the stars their doom to die
No more should come—but love to man shine forth
In every ray from heaven that reached the beauteous earth.

ELDRED.



(1870.)

The autumn sunset gilds the ancient oaks
As with a parting homage ; they had braved,
So many years, the wracking of the storms.
And through their mossy festoons glancing down,
As with an homage, too, the sunset gleam
Touches with softened rays the aged brow
And hoary locks of one who stands beneath
The shadow of the oaks ; for he had borne,
Through many years, the pitiless storms of fate.

Behind him, with new, cheering flowers adorned,
An humble cottage has replaced his old
Ancestral mansion, razed by ruthless war.
Before him spreads the water of the Bay—
(Child of the ocean—with its dancing waves
And glistening sheen, and buoyant stir of life.
Yet all unseen by him the sunset light ;
Unseen the sportive waves and sheltering oaks ;
Unseen all sights save one that fills his thoughts,
Shading his feeble eyes with palsied hand,
He watches, still afar, the dipping sail
Of skiff or pinnace flitting o'er the brine,
Like sea-gull with expanded wings. Now near
And nearer it has come, till like a bird
It folds its wings and rests upon the strand.

The boatman rose, and deftly with his crutch
 Struck in the sand—as some bold cavalier,
 These shores exploring, might have used his lance—
 Leapt to the beach, as to a spot well known,
 And moored his little craft. Sore maimed for life
 When once he led the assault, and forward bore
 The battle-flag, while round him hundreds fell—
 Sore maimed for life, a martial comeliness
 Still clothed his noble form, and beauty still
 Sat in his bronzed cheek. With wavy curls
 Uncovered to the breeze, he stood awhile,
 Like one all unobserved, and looked to heaven,
 As though some sad emotion stirred his heart.
 And in the shadow of the sheltering oaks,
 His father, in that moment, raised his hand,
 And, with a prayer unspoken, blessed his son.
 Him Eldred saw not; yet his soul must needs
 Have felt a quickening grace from heaven descend
 To such a prayer. Then stepped the old man forth
 And called his son. And Eldred quickly came
 And sat beside his father on the shore.
 The balmy earth was lulled in sweet repose
 Of eventide; and, save the rippling waves,
 All else was still. In silence sire and son
 Together sat; and from the homestead near,
 A solitary bird, with noiseless wing,
 Moved slowly through the air, and westward flew.
 And long they gazed upon its lessening form,
 Till far off, toward the setting of the sun,
 It vanished from their view. Then Eldred spake:

“ Father, I come to say farewell. What need
 Or such as I am hath our fallen State?
 The terms a conquering soldier freely gave
 Are trampled in the dust by party power,
 And peace dented us; vengeance following still
 From year to year, and still unsatisfied.

Disfranchised, spoiled, stript of our heritage
 In freedom's blessings—shall we stay and see
 Our ignorant slaves made masters in our stead?
 How can we bear the shame! 'Tis well—'tis well
 Our ancient homes are leveled with the dust,
 And nought is left us but our unploughed fields
 And our impoverishment—lest in our halls
 Some lingering echo of the past, some mute,
 Revered memorial of our proud estate
 Might rouse us to throw off the hateful chains
 With which they subtly bind us in the name
 Of equal rights and liberty and law."

His father bowed his head, as one whose heart
 New grief assails; then sadly turned and said:
 Eldred, my son, say whither wouldst thou seek
 A land where brood no wrongs—where lust of rule
 And greed of gain have not triumphant risen?
 I fear on all these States a change descends;
 That public virtue a by-word will be,
 And Freedom lose her charm—which Heaven forbid!
 O'erpowered, impoverished, and almost abased,
 Though we seem impotent to rise again,
 Yet must we aim to rise. Our hour will come,
 If we be true and steadfast in ourselves.
 Here let the battle of thy life be fought,
 To efface our wrongs, to guide to peaceful arts
 And purer life our liberated serfs;
 To fill the wasted land with strenuous men;
 To wake the dreamers, dreaming o'er the past,
 To prayer and hope and enterprise and toil—
 Our life-work in God's service and the State's.
 What freer land invites thy footsteps hence?
 What friend, with heart more loving than my own,
 Beckons thee on to fairer skies than these?
 Here thy paternal acres still are thine,
 And plenteous crops await but thy command,

With all the wealth they bring and power for good,
 Chafe not at Heaven's decrees. Our all we staked,
 And all, save our integrity, is lost—
 And these bare fields! But thou art with me still—
 In thee I live again. The drooping bird
 That westward from our homestead went, presaged
 My too—too grievous loss, if hence thou go,
 Thy loss to me forever”

Eldred rose

With softened heart; for fondly did he love
 His aged father, and had oft designed
 To bear him with him from the saddening scene
 Of their old home;—he rose with humid eye
 And looked upon the sparkling waves, whose voice
 Said “stay;” and other waves and others still
 Came chasing toward him out from all the Bay,
 And all their voices in one chorus joined
 To bid him stay; and memories, gathering fast
 From by-gone years, came whispering to him “stay.”

Then came his father gently to his side,
 As leaning on his crutch, in thoughtful mood,
 He listened to the voices of the waves;
 “Eldred, dost thou remember how these fields
 Were won, and with their teeming wealth became
 Our home? An Eldred once, (thou bearest his name,)
 Shipwrecked and destitute, survived alone
 Of all his crew; and on this unknown coast,
 Two centuries ago, was captive made
 By dusky warriors, and was doomed to die.
 But death he courted, desperate grown by toils
 And wasting suffering;—cast by the treacherous sea
 To perish on the inhospitable shore,
 Yet in his dauntless, death-defying mien
 His safety rested; for the savage chief

In admiration claimed him for his own
 And called him son. And after many moons
 He led him eastward, where the English flag
 Was bravely flying o'er a hardy band
 Of venturous men. With kindly eye, the chief
 Looked upon Eldred's face, and pointed toward
 The laboring colonists; then mutely turned
 And left him there alone.

When Spanish wiles
 Urged the rude warriors on to ruinous war,
 'Twas Eldred's voice that from the victor's stroke
 Saved, on this spot, the fallen chieftain's life.
 Here his last wigwam rose; and Eldred oft,
 While peace prevailed, would come with pleasing gifts
 To cheer his aged friend—his dying friend.
 Yonder still honored, lies his humble grave.

When stronger tribes united to destroy
 Our few but valiant countrymen, again
 This blood-stained land its hard-fought battles bore;
 And for his deeds, to Eldred were assigned
 These fields, a forest then. Their fertile soil
 He turned to the genial sun, and beauteous made
 For those he loved, this home—now mine and thine.

And hath not since the cruel Spaniard come
 To seize these coveted lands; and Indian hordes
 Of hated Yemassee, in frightful raids,
 Dispersed our kin, and sacked and burned and slain?
 Through all we held our own, and stronger grew,
 And turned these fertile acres to the sun.
 And our own motherland, through eight sad years,
 Of unrelenting war, her hired hosts

Sent hither to reclaim or crush us down.
 Yet still we held our own, and stronger grew,
 And turned these fertile acres to the sun.
 And wealth returned with hospitable hand ;
 And virtue, with bold self-reliance twinned,
 Garnered her treasures to enrich our hearts.
 Then thought we, in our pride, no earthly power
 Could cope with Southern valor. Bloody war
 In vindication of our rights we waged,
 Four years of bloody war—brothers in strife
 With brothers. Do they, crueller than all
 Our former foes, disfranchise and still mark
 With name of rebel our most upright men
 And wisest ; and for friendship choosing force
 Outcast us—lest they lose their short-lived power ?
 Yet we shall hold our own, and stronger grow,
 And turn these fertile acres to the sun,
 And deem no man our master. Wrong but works
 To undermine itself—digs its own pit,
 And God shall therein cast it. Stay, my son ;
 Thy hand should lay these grey hairs in the grave,
 And here beside my fathers, would I rest.”

And Eldred strove to master in his breast
 The impulsive promptings to denounce the wrongs
 He yet must bear ; and then with gentle hand,
 As gentle as a girl's, he smoothed the locks,
 The snowy locks the ruffling breeze had touched ;
 And said, “For thy sake, father, will I stay ;
 And help foul wrong descend into her pit.”

And scarce their converse ended ere the beams
 Of Venus glimmered on the waves and called
 The loving Eldred to his timid spouse
 And little ones and home beyond the Bay.

And rising cloudless in the east, the moon
Poured down her silvery light ; and onward sped
The pinnacle. Eldred felt the merry waves
Lifting him up for joy ; and to his ear
An utterance came, as they, with rippling notes,
Would sing to one they loved. His father watched,
Beneath the shadow of the oaks, far off
The moon-lit sail, that like a sea gull seemed,
With wings expanded, hastening to her nest.

THE END

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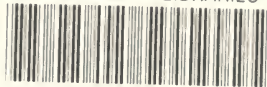
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